

The Seattle Squeeze and the #Realign99 Closure: Coordinated Agency Response Plan



Media Briefing
Seattle City Hall
December 20, 2018

As we build a better Seattle, how we get around is about to change.

Over the next five years, private and public construction projects will continue to change how we move and deliver goods.



We're entering a new normal in Seattle.



It will be worth it.



Pike Pine Renaissance



Central Waterfront



Seattle Center Arena



Growing light rail system

Principles and Approach

1. We need a City of Seattle-wide coordination strategy.
2. This is a regional challenge that demands a regional approach and regional coordination.
3. Use this new era as an opportunity to encourage people to use transit and shift away from single occupancy vehicle trips.



Key Step: Subcabinet

- Cross-departmental subcommittees led by Mayor's Office staff and Innovation & Performance team:
 1. City operations;
 2. External outreach and access to services;
 3. External communications;
 4. Internal communications and Alternative Work Guidelines
- Nearly all City Departments involved
- Accountability at Cabinet level (incl. Cabinet meetings devoted to issue)



Program Schedule



2018



Early 2019



Tunnel preparation

Fall 2018:

- Switch Alaskan Way travel lanes west (complete)
- Complete tunnel systems testing
- Operations, maintenance and emergency responder staff training
- Preparatory tunnel on- and off-ramp work

SR 99 closure

Jan. 4:

- On- and off-ramps near stadiums close

Jan. 11:

- Full SR 99 closure begins
- Finish eight ramps to/from new tunnel
- Realign SR 99 into new tunnel
- Tunnel grand opening celebration

Tunnel opens

Feb*:

- Closure ends and SR 99 tunnel opens
- SR 99 NB off-ramp to downtown and Alaskan Way opens

Work begins

Feb*:

- Viaduct removal
- Closing and filling Battery Street Tunnel
- Rebuilding three blocks of Aurora Avenue North

Why close SR 99 for three weeks?

Connecting SR 99 to the tunnel: Crews will have to work in the path of SR 99's current configuration to connect SR 99 to the new tunnel. The graphics below show the path of SR 99 today (yellow) and work zones during the closure (orange).

Ramp closures - Up to six week of impact:

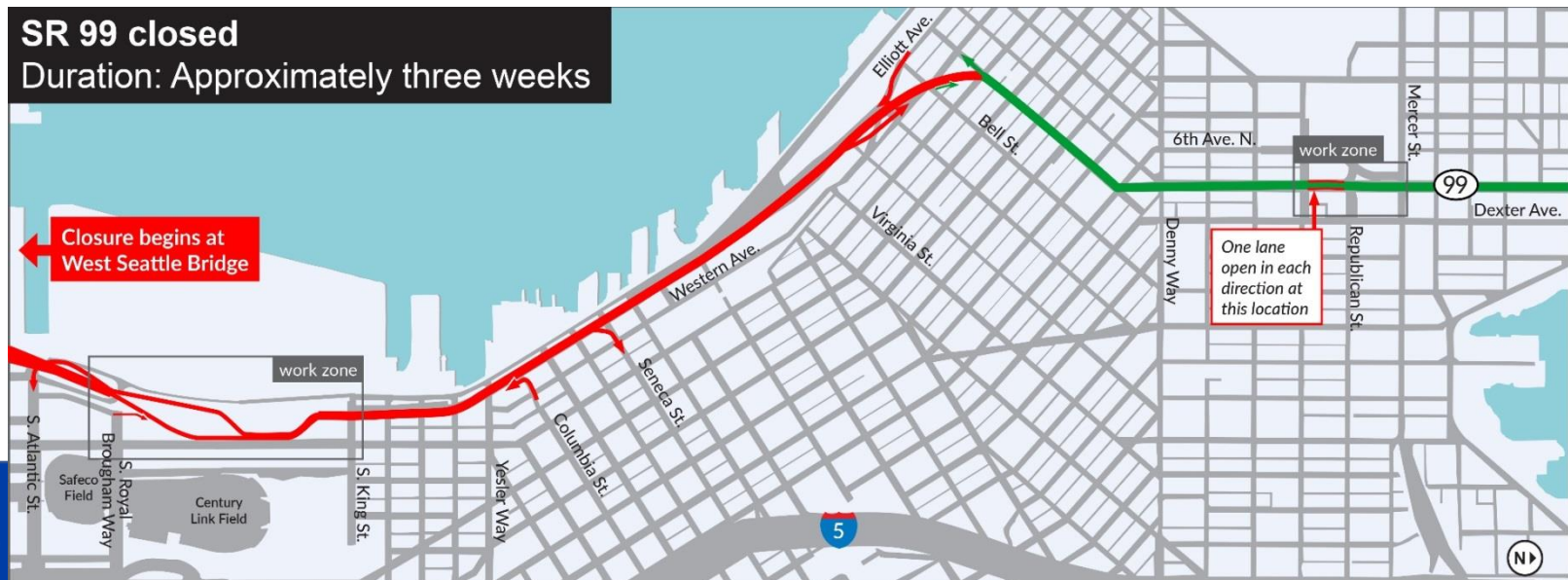
- **On Jan. 4, 2019,** WSDOT will close the S Atlantic St. southbound off-ramp and the northbound Royal Brougham Way on-ramp.
- **After the new SR 99 tunnel opens,** the northbound off-ramp to downtown will remain closed for up to two weeks.



SR 99 closure and tunnel opening: get ready

Scheduled to begin January 11, 2019

- **Duration:** about three-weeks for SR 99 closure and up to three weeks of ramp closures
- **Closing a highway adds more drivers to other parts of the system:** 90,000 vehicles per day, including several thousand trucks, and buses have to use another route
- **Expect long backups:** On I-5 and routes into downtown Seattle, especially during peak commute times
- **Major change to transportation system:** New SR 99 tunnel will open, other construction continues



Event agenda

99StepForward.com

Feb. 2 – 3, 2019

Saturday

- Fun run
- Ribbon cutting ceremony
- Public festival
- Public tunnel walk/access
- Goodbye to the viaduct/ hello waterfront

Sunday

- Bike ride



Finding a New Normal in Ongoing Changes

Opening the new SR 99 tunnel is just the start:

- Tunnel will open toll-free for a period of time.
- Traffic patterns will change because we are changing access to SR 99.
- Construction continues after the tunnel opens to drivers.

Seattle will experience ongoing change:

- It will take time before traffic patterns settle out.
- **Tolls range from \$1 to \$2.25 with a *Good To Go* pass.**
- Some trips will be quicker and others will be longer.
- The City will rebuild the new Alaskan Way, which will open in 2021.



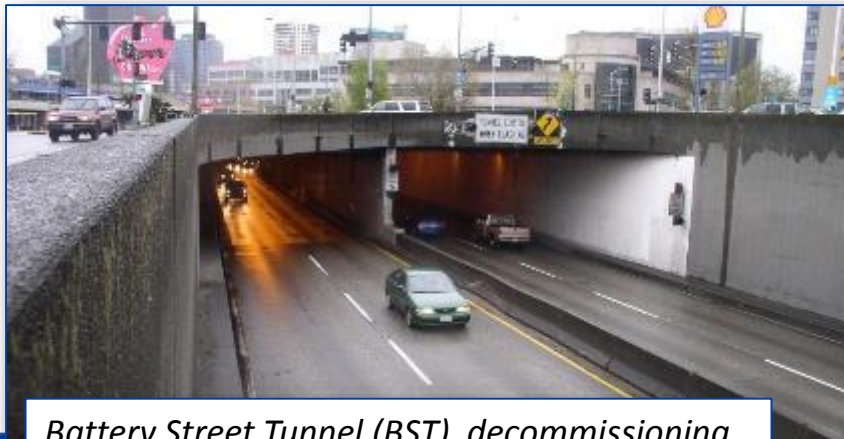
Construction after the SR 99 Tunnel Opens



Viaduct removal: Approx. 6 months

Filling and sealing the Battery Street Tunnel: Approx. 24 months

North surface street connections: Approx. 15 months



The City of Seattle's Five Pillars for Downtown Mobility



Pillar 1: Monitoring and Managing Our Transportation System



Pillar 3: Reducing the Number of Drive-Alone Trips Downtown



Pillar 2: Investing in Transit and Expanding Access



Pillar 4: Managing the Public Right-of-Way



Pillar 5:
Communications &
Outreach

Safety remains our top priority.

VISION
ZERO

- Follow the rules + take a deep breath = people and goods getting around safely
- Crashes cause congestion
- Education + enforcement are coming

Pillar 1: Monitoring and Managing Our Transportation System

- Monitor and respond 24/7 to changing traffic conditions and weather
 - Metro staff on site to coordinate routing changes
 - Added traffic cameras and monitoring devices
 - Increased incident response teams
 - WSDOT increasing I-5 active traffic management system
- Increase use of real-time construction, bridge openings, railroad closing, and travel time data by 3rd party applications
- Deploy temporary dynamic message signs to share real-time and routing information



Pillar 1: Monitoring and Managing Our Transportation System

- Add temporary transit lanes on Cherry, West Seattle Bridge, 4th Ave S and Aurora
- Eliminate eastbound contraflow lanes on Seneca St
- Open transit and freight bypass between Alaskan Way and E. Marginal Way
- Allow all traffic to use the southbound HOV lane from Mercer to Corson
- Restrict on-street parking on key arterials
- Expand hours when the key bridges do not open for mariners (Coast Guard)



Pillar 2: Investing in Transit

- Expanded transit priority hours on 3rd Avenue to 7 days/week (August 2018)
- Added peak and shoulder-period trips with STBD, Metro and Amazon (September 2018)
- Permit free-floating bike share to improve first mile/last mile access (10,000 bikes by SR99 closure)
- Identify and prepare staging areas for Metro buses to maintain transit reliability
- Mayor's ORCA Opportunity program (15,000 students)
- Increase West Seattle Water Taxi service – extra boat added
- Launch Ride 2 on-demand shuttle and increasing existing shuttle service
- Improve access for drivers, carshare, rideshare and bike share





King County

SR 99 Closure North End Transit Pathways

- Aurora buses will be impacted by North Portal area work
- Routes includes E, 5, 5X, 26, 28





King County

Southend Transit Pathways Sequence

During AWW full Closure – Before tunnel opens

- **Duration:** 4 - 5 weeks
- **Affected routes:** 21x, 37, 55, 56, 57, 113, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, C Line

Interim pathway via 1st Ave S

- **Duration:** 9 months – 1 year
- **Affected routes:** 21x, 37, 55, 56, 57, 113, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, C Line

Permanent southend pathway

- **Duration:** Permanent
- **Affect:** When the Viaduct Demolition, Waterfront, and Columbia St 2-Way Configuration projects are complete, this pathway will use transit lanes on SR 99, Alaskan Way Surface St, and Columbia St for both ingress and egress of the Seattle CBD.



Water Taxi



- 10 minute ride from Seacrest Park in West Seattle
- 22 minute ride from Vashon Island to downtown
- Second vessel for West Seattle routes
- Additional 250 parking spots at Pier 2 with shuttle to Seacrest Park
- Additional parking at Harbor Ave SW and SW Bronson Way
- Dedicated Vanshare parking at Don Armeni Park
- Added shuttle service (Route 773 and 775) from the Junction and Alki Beach

Pillar 3: Reducing Drive-Alone Trips Downtown

- Engaged with Seattle's top 25 employers
- Partnered with major employers to promote flexible work options
- Expand marketing and pretax program engagement
- Support employer shuttle access to transit zones and private park-and-ride locations
- Metro: WorkSmart consultations for flexwork; carpool incentives
- WSDOT: Free SR-99 Closure consultations through Commute Seattle
- WSDOT, Metro and City of Seattle: expanding agency employee flexible work opportunities to decrease peak-hour drive alone trips

SDOT, Commute Seattle, Challenge Seattle: Move the Needle Flexwork Challenge

Pillar 3: Reducing Drive-Alone Trips Downtown: The City of Seattle & Our Downtown Campus

- Snapshot:
 - Of the 12,000 City employees, approximately 7,000 commute to the downtown core each day.
 - Approximately 10% commute via a Single Occupancy Vehicle.
- As a major employer, the City is committed to reducing the volume of Single Occupancy Vehicles and reducing total commutes each day to the downtown core.
- Currently, 13% of the total City workforce utilizes Alternative Work Arrangements, which include Telework or Flex Work Schedules.
 - We are committed to increasing that number to 20% in 2019.
 - This will reduce the volume of trips by our City workforce and provide capacity to those workers in our community that are necessary to commute during this time period.
- We will track commute modes through our internal mobility platform, “My Trips,” as well as the percentage of Alternative Work Arrangements.

Pillar 4: Managing the Public Right-of-Way

- Work with contractors to maximize ROW available during the SR99 closure
 - Proactively managing construction project schedules
 - Expedited permits for street restoration in advance of the closure
 - Modify select permits on key arterials in lead-up to closure
- Deploy Uniformed Police Officers at key transit intersections to maintain transit access and movements
- Launch e-Cargo trike pilot with UW to test strategies to maintain access and movement for urban goods



Pillar 5: Communications & Outreach

- www.seattle.gov/traffic with real-time corridor information subscriptions
- www.kingcounty.gov/getready with commute options and transit rider impacts
- Conduct 100+ regional, mostly joint briefings since September
- Distribute translated materials through community centers, libraries, daycare centers and Seattle Public Schools
- Develop GHG-themed call to action with the Office of Sustainability and Environment
- Engage the media regularly

Seattle Traffic

HOME ABOUT CURRENT TRAFFIC BLOG TOOLS MAPS Q & A PARTNERS

When is the best time to leave?

Right now? In 45 minutes? Find out now! This page displays dynamic traffic times as of 4:28 PM so you can make a realistic plan.

INBOUND TO DOWNTOWN (minutes)

i Inbound traffic is **ABOUT THE SAME AS NORMAL** at this time and conditions are predicted to **HOLD STEADY** in the next 45 minutes.



ROUTE	TYPICAL	NOW	IN 45 MIN
Ballard to Commercial Core	22	24	26
Columbia City to Commercial Core	19	17	18
Green Lake to Commercial Core	31	28	29
Lake City to Commercial Core	37	39	36
MLK at Holly St to Commercial Core	20	18	19
North Beacon Hill to Commercial Core	14	14	14
Northgate to Commercial Core	34	56	37
Rainier Beach to Commercial Core	24	21	23
South Lake Union to Commercial Core	13	16	15
University Campus to Commercial Core	25	25	24
West Seattle Junction to Commercial Core	13	14	14

Plan B: Additional Actions For SR99 Closure

Initial Response

- Thresholds include volume, travel time and transit travel time increases.
- Make additional signal modifications
- Increase on-street parking restrictions and enforcement
- Add transit-only lanes
- Operate streets as transit-only
- Reroute transit to less congested routes

Secondary Responses May Include

- Modifying I-5 Ramp availability and signal timing (WSDOT)
- Restrict turns for single occupant vehicles
- Expand transit priority and transit restrictions to extend from 5 am to 10 pm
- Further decrease City-employee travel for work and commute purposes
- Modify public messaging to increase Call to Action

Buses out of Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel

Current Tunnel Routes	Proposed Surface Street Pathway
41 (all-day)	3 rd Ave (SB and NB)
74 (peak service only)	2 nd Ave (SB) – 5 th /6 th Ave (NB)
255 (all-day)	5 th Ave (SB) – 5 th /6 th Ave (NB)
101 (all-day)	2 nd Ave (SB) – 4 th Ave (NB)
102 (peak service only)	
150 (all-day)	
550 (all-day)	

- All buses come out of the Downtown Seattle: March 23, 2019
- **Mitigation:** Reroutes to surface streets downtown; added service hours to maintain service reliability; capital improvements to pathways and bus stops
- **Communications:** Rider alerts, street teams, social media, web presence

Response to Seattle Transit Tunnel Becoming Light Rail ONLY – March 23, 2019

- Improve real-time construction and traffic information use by web map providers
- Pilot additional urban good delivery strategies
- Encourage and support ORCA LIFT sales
- Create mobility hubs for first and last-mile connections
- Continue public engagement and awareness
- Add off-board fare payment on 3rd Ave for quicker boarding
- Build a new transit path on 5th and 6th Avenues



All Door Boarding Expansion

Effective Date: March 2019

Areas Impacted: Seattle, Shoreline, Vashon Island, SW King County neighborhoods

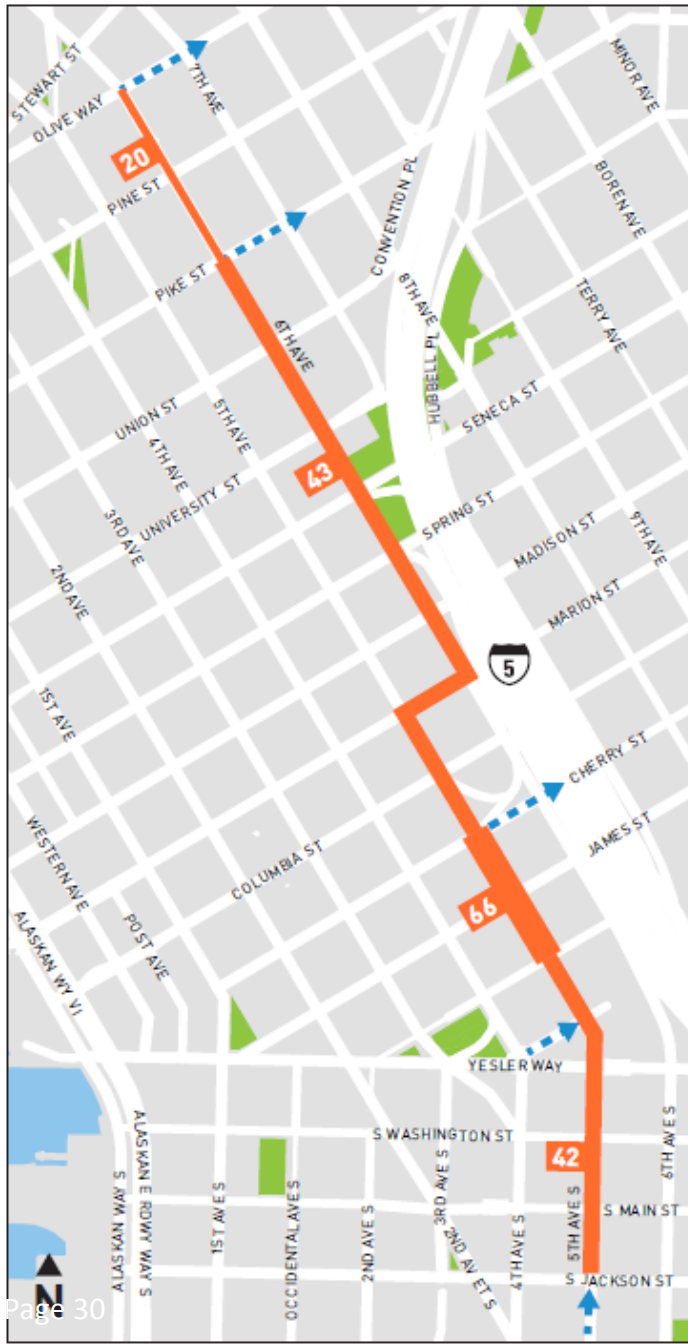
Routes Impacted: All routes using 3rd Avenue Transit Corridor, 42 routes in total

Communications: Rider alerts, information at stops, transit alerts, multi-language media, Fare Enforcement Officers, driver education



New Northbound Transit Pathway on 5th and 6th Avenues

- **Effective Date:** March 23, 2019
- **Routes affected:** 76, 77, 252, 257, 301, 308, 311, 316
- **Benefits:** 4th Avenue operates quicker and more reliability; adds resiliency to system; balances transit capacity on all available downtown transit pathways
- **Communications:** Rider alerts, transit alerts to affected routes, printed materials on buses, social media



Plan B - Additional Interventions for Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel End of Joint Operations and Seattle Squeeze

- Adding transit-only lanes through downtown
- Increasing transit capacity on non-Metro coaches (Metro)
- Increasing HOV occupancy requirements on highways (WSDOT)
- Limiting access to downtown streets at certain times of day by non-HOV vehicles
- Accelerating the launch of Lake Union Water Taxi
- Speeding implementation of projects from the Center City Bike Network
- Increasing commercial parking tax for peak period, drive-alone trips
- Extending permit revocations on key downtown arterials

Questions?

SDOT

Know Before You Go:

www.seattle.gov/traffic

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@SDOTtraffic

Commute Seattle

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<https://commuteseattle.com/sr99/>

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King County Metro

Metro Trip Planning Resources:

<https://kingcounty.gov/getready>

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